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Thanksgiving Turkey Dress Rehearsal

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U. S. Department of Agriculture

A radio interview between Miss Ruth Van Deman, Bureau of Home Economics, Mr. E. J. Rowell, Agricultural Marketing Service, and Mr. Wallace Kadderly, Office of Information, broadcast Tuesday, November 12, 1940, in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, by the National Broadcasting Company and a network of 87 associate radio stations.

WALLACE KADDERLY:

Yes, here we are in Washington ---- feeling just as fit as the fiddles out in Chicago.

Once more Ruth Van Deman of the Bureau of Home Economics has wrought a miracle, she's set before us right here by the microphone, a roast turkey ---- steaming hot ---- apparently straight from the oven.

RUTH VAN DEMAN:

No, Wallace, this is no miracle. It's just a sample of 100 per cent cooperation. No. 1 cooperator is Mr. Marsden, --- Stanley J. Marsden ---- poultry specialist at the Beltsville Research Center. He picked this turkey to represent his streamlined birds --- 1940 model.

KADDERLY:

It's a mighty neat, plump looking job --- long of keel and broad of breast---- and I see it still has its experimental number on the wing band.

VAN DEMAN:

No. 2 cooperator is our friend Lucy Alexander sitting modestly over there in the visitors' gallery. She's the lady who got down to the Bureau of Home Economics laboratory at the crack of dawn this morning, and stuffed this turkey, and slid it into the oven, so it would be done in time for this broadcast.

KADDERLY:

She certainly timed it to a split second. Miss Alexander, won't you rise and take a bow? (Pause)

We're delighted to have you with us.

VAN DEMAN:

Cooperator No. 3 is the gentleman at your left, Wallace. Mr. E. J. (Mike) Rowell.

KADDERLY:

Mike, it looks as though carving were your specialty today. Got that knife sharpened up to a razor edge?

E. J. ROWELL:

You bet.

VAN DEMAN:

And Mike's also the man who hailed the taxi that rode this turkey up to the studio door.

(over)

KADDERLY:

Well, well, this is a cooperative enterprise sure enough. When Mike proceeds with that carving, I'll be glad to cooperate too --- as an official taster.

VAN DEMAN:

There are probably several others around here who'll "cooperate" on that basis too --- Don Gardiner and our friend John Hogan --- the engineer in the control room.

ROWELL:

Wallace, if you don't mind I'd like to get the market news about turkeys off my chest first --- before I go into action with the carving knife.

KADDERLY:

Good. Lets have the news.

ROWELL:

There's another big crop of turkeys this year -- over 33 million birds. They're averaging slightly heavier than the turkeys that came to market this time last November.

KADDERLY:

The newer scientific methods of breeding and feeding turkeys are having an effect, probably.

ROWELL:

Right. Also it looks this year as though turkey growers were going to market more of their birds early in the season. Many stores have already had week-end "specials" on turkey.

KADDERLY:

There's no reason to wait until Thanksgiving or Christmas to have turkey.

ROWELL:

Not with the millions of turkeys we grow now days and the prices favorable to the consumer.

VAN DEMAN:

Turkey time has changed. To lots of people turkey is a year-a-round possibility. Certainly when there's a big family party, or any big crowd to feed turkey's about the most economical bird you can serve. Economical that is of time in the kitchen. One large bird is easier to prepare and cook than several small ones.

And the turkey carves out more economically. There's more meat to eat in proportion to the bony frame work.

KADDERLY:

On the carving side, Mike, I don't want to rush you.

ROWELL:

Don't worry, Wallace. This turkey is not getting cold.

VAN DEMAN:

No, a turkey, or any big roast of meat, keeps hot for a while after it's taken from the oven.

KADDERLY:

Even though you hold that oven temperature down to moderate --- around 300 or so degrees -- while the turkey's cooking?

VAN DEMAN:

Yes. The moderate oven heat from start to finish is what cooks a turkey evenly ---- keeps in the juice. That and turning the bird every 30 or 40 minutes --- and basting with pan drippings and melted fat.

KADDERLY:

Not a 50 - 50 mixture of melted butter and hot water.

VAN DEMAN:

No, no water. This is young turkey. You remarked on its plump fine figure, just a moment ago. Don't talk about basting a young turkey like this with water --- unless you want to shock Lucy Alexander. And don't suggest a covered roaster to steam jacket a young bird either. Steam and water draws juices out of meat. I'm sure you want Mike to carve you a slice that's tender and juicy.

ROWELL:

Yes, Wallace, for further details on roasting turkey, we refer you now to that famous blue-and-white folder--Poultry Cooking issued by the Bureau of Home Economics, of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

The time has come now to carve. (Sound of knife rattling on platter.)

KADDERLY:

Watch out there Mike, spare that platter.

ROWELL:

Sorry --- couldn't help it. That drumstick came off with one cut.

VAN ROTH:

Did somebody say juicy? Boy!

ROWELL:

Look at this white meat. It just shaves off. Plenty of juice there too.

KADDERLY:

A perfectly cooked turkey.

ROWELL: (Chanting)

A piece of dark meat ---- a slice of white ---- and a spoonful of stuffing.

Here, Ruth, this plate is for -----

VAN DEMAN:

No, that goes to the cook --- Miss Lucy Alexander - I'll take mine later.

ROWELL:

What do you know. This stuffing has oysters in it.

VAN DEMAN:

Isn't that your favorite kind?

ROWELL:

Having been born in the same state with Plymouth Rock, it is.

KADDERLY:

But they aren't rock oysters though -- not the little fellows we call rock oysters out Puget Sound way.

VAN DEMAN:

Those would be good though. Any small or medium-sized oysters are all right in stuffing.

ROWELL:

Do you cook 'em before you mix 'em with the bread crumbs?

VAN DEMAN:

We did this time. Cooked them in their own liquor just long enough to start the gills curling.

Then we drained the oysters and combined them with the rest of the stuffing.

KADDERLY:

This stuffing isn't the least bit wet or soggy.

VAN DEMAN:

It's our regular stuffing mixture, with oysters taking the place of celery. And the seasonings---the onion and herbs---piped down a little. That gives the oysters a chance to assert their flavor.

ROWELL:

And, Mr. Kadderly, for that stuffing recipe, again I refer you to that well-known folder on Poultry Cooking -----

KADDERLY:

Issued by the Bureau of Home Economics - U. S. Department of Agriculture. -- Yes, Mike, I see I'll have to refresh my memory by reading that from cover to cover.

VAN DEMAN:

By the way, it takes quite a lot of stuffing to fill a turkey. About two and a half quarts of bread crumbs went into this.

ROWELL:

Dry bread crumbs?

VAN DEMAN:

Medium dry---that is the inside forked out of loaves of bread two days old. We don't use the crusts. And you don't want the bread too dry.

This stuffing has celery seed in it.....to give a touch of celery flavor.

ROWELL:

And parsley----I see the little flecks of green.

VAN DEMAN:

And savory seasoning----and as I said a soupcon of onion---just a suspicion---
---and turkey fat and melted butter.

ROWELL:

No moistening at all.

VAN DEMAN:

None, except what the oysters give--and the juices that cook out the turkey
and into the stuffing.

KADDERLY:

Um-----umph----It's the best oyster stuffing that ever graced my plate ---.
And this turkey itself is simply superb.

VAN DEMAN:

Again, it's time for Lucy Alexander to take a bow.

KADDERLY:

Ruth, just take a bow yourself, if you don't mind. This is the fourth of
these turkey broadcasts, thanks to you, when we've had turkey to taste---the real
thing, here on the table. Thanksgiving dress rehearsal we might call it.

ROWELL:

This turkey's soon going to be a carcass, Wallace. This knife is sharp.

VAN DEMAN:

I know. You're carving for the wishbone to send Everett Mitchell.

ROWELL:

That's a thought. We'll send Everett the wish bone and put a card on it ---
"Wishing you were here."

KADDERLY:

Well, Farm and Home friends, once more we've brought you this very informal
---but very real report and demonstration of some of the Department's research on
turkey production---and turkey cooking the modern scientific way.

And again, we offer to any of you who would like the Bureau of Home Economics
directions for roasting and stuffing the turkey --- we offer the folder on Poultry
Cooking. If you want this before Tanksgiving don't lose any time in sending us
your request. Address the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture,
Washington, D. C. --- and ask for Poultry Cooking, that's all that's necessary.

VAN DEMAN:

Plus your own address.

KADDERLY:

That's right too.

(Repeat offer of leaflet)

